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OUR NATION'S SORROW.

AN ADDRESS.

Delivered in St. Luke's Church, Racine.

ON THE

DAY OF THE FUNERAL

OF

PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

APRIL 19th, 1865.

BY THE RECTOR, THE

REV. A. D. BENEDICT.

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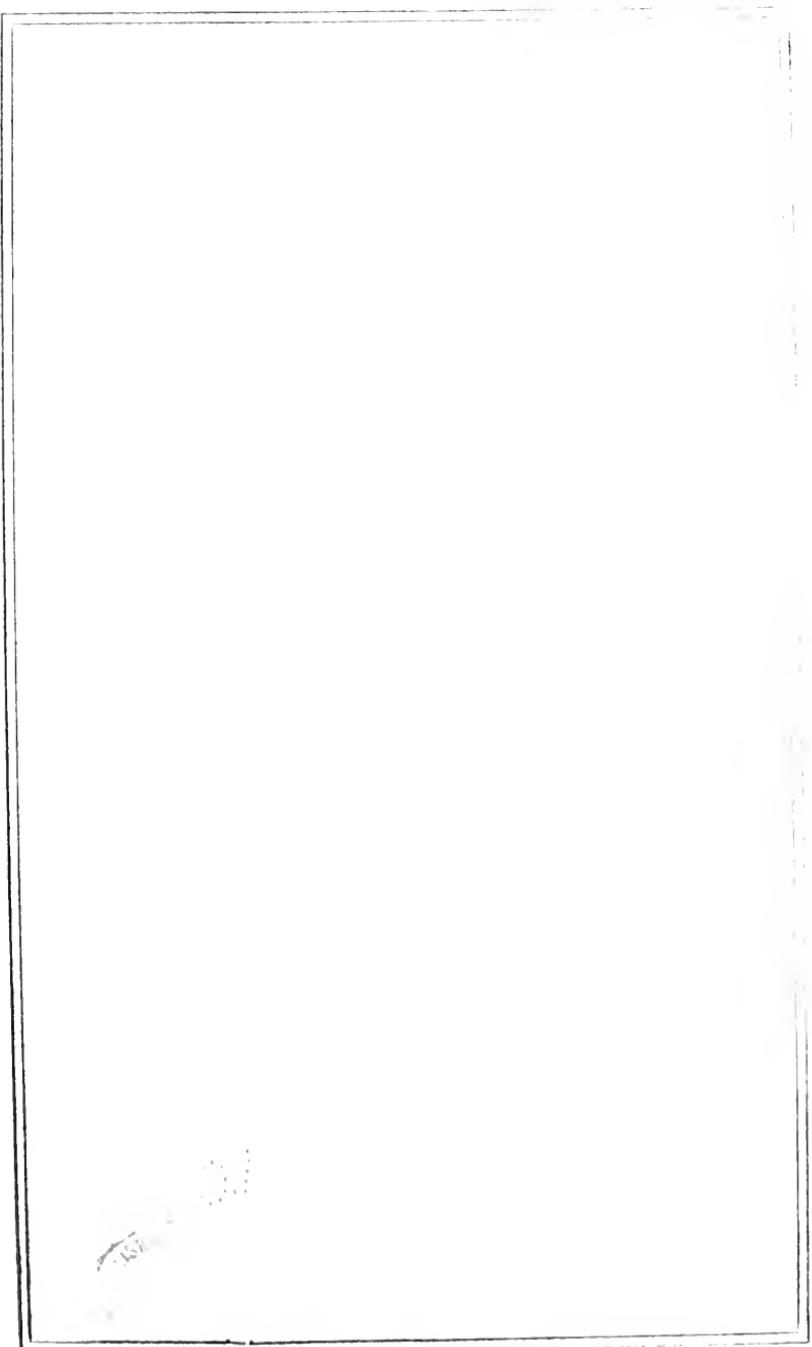
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TO THOSE OF
MY PARISHIONERS
WHO HAVE REQUESTED THE
PUBLICATION OF THE FOLLOWING
HASTILY WRITTEN ADDRESS, I DEDICATE
THE SAME, ONLY REGRETTING THAT IT
IS NOT MORE WORTHY OF THE
MOURNFUL EVENT WHICH
IT COMMEMORATES.

A. D. BENEDICT.

O, Almighty and everliving God, our only Refuge in this time of trouble, have compassion on our afflicted nation. "Out of the deep do we call unto thee, O Lord; Lord, hear our voice." In Thy mysterious wisdom the iniquitous devices of the wicked have prevailed. Under our mournful bereavement, we look to Thee for grace, that we may commit our sorely stricken heritage into Thy hands, knowing that Thou canst make even the wrath of man to praise Thee. Desert us not in this our hour of bitter trial. Bring good out of this fearful evil. Stay the hand of further violence. May *all* those evils which the craft and subtlety of the devil or man would work against us, by Thy good Providence be brought to nought. In our adversity, as well as prosperity, help us to recognize Thy governing hand, and in all things to be guided by Thy blessed will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O merciful God and Heavenly Father, who hast taught us in Thy Holy Word that Thou dost not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men; look with pity, we beseech Thee, upon the bereaved family of our lamented President. In Thy wisdom Thou hast seen fit to visit them with trouble and to bring distress upon them. Remember them, O Lord, in mercy; sanctify thy earthly creation to them; and give their souls with patience and in their affliction, and with recompence to Thy blessed judgment; comfort them with a sense of Thy goodness; lift up Thy countenance upon them and give them peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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ADDRESS.

THERE are times when words are almost powerless. Times, when no language satisfies all that a speaker wishes to convey, or a congregation to hear. When the deep waters of the soul are stirred by a common subject of interest—when the full heart sympathizes *only* with a certain class of sentiments and emotions—when the feelings are already elevated to a high pitch of intensity, it is indeed a difficult task to continue the strain, and supply all that a subject worthily demands. In such a straitened position, I find myself to-day. I am sensible of my *in*ability to do justice to my task, to present the words that are fully suited to that most afflictive event which has called us together. Everywhere around us fall the tokens of our body's decay. Numberless picke and plow, ball-bags, bell, and phiz, of incident, are draped with the habiliments of death. Numberless people, also, display to their gathered congregation the symbols of a grief that oppresses every heart. The vast body of our American people are at this time intently gazing on the fearful "countenance" of our National woes, and again after it absorbed with that terrible event, which has shot its cold chills through every fibre of our body politic; which makes us almost doubt the truth of that which our very

presence in these courts forces us to believe. Yes, our Chief Magistrate, our honored President, is no more. His cold remains now lie shrouded in death, waiting to be borne to their last resting place in the grave. His death at *any* time, through any of those diseases that continually prey upon the living, would have occasioned sore lamentation. Yet, such a visitation would have been generally regarded as a wise dispensation of Almighty Providence, an issue to which mortal man, without distinction, is everywhere exposed. But that he should die by a base assassin, that a vile wretch, whom all would denounce as unfit to live, should, for himself or under the instigation of others, be allowed to execute the deed of blood, shocks our reason and sorely tries our faith. *W'* our hearts are ready to exclaim, should this have been permitted? Why should he, who for the past four years has guided our National bark through most dangerous seas, until our hearts were gladdened with the sight of the promised haven, why should such a one be the destined victim of a deeply laid scheme for clothing our land in mourning, and that, too, at a time when thousands of hearts were lifted in gratitude, and thousands of voices were chanting hymns of thanksgiving to the Giver of all victory for His merciful interposition in our behalf? Was our previous elation too boastful, our rejoicing too godless? Did we need, for our sore correction, thus in a moment to be cast down, until our lips are forced to kiss the dust? Yet, that this act of murderous violence *has* occurred in the Providence of God, we cannot question, impossible as it may be for our weak minds to solve the perplexities attending it. God, we are assured, "makes even the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain." The history of the world abounds in instances of goodness being triumphed over by vice, of the innocent and unsuspecting becoming the victims of base intrigue and villainous deception. Neros steeped in blood have seemingly flourished in great prosperity. In-

deed, the very foundation of our holy religion was laid when malicious Jews with wicked hands had crucified the Lord of Glory. It is on account of this seeming inequality in the Divine dealings, that our faith is often sorely tried. Reason, as in the manner by which our Chief Magistrate has been removed from our head, searches in vain for a solution of the mystery. It is one of the subjects which it cannot grasp. But, blessed be God, we *may* trust. Faith is above reason. And, therefore, although now our sea is dark and tempestuous, yet we know that there is a loving Father walking upon the waters in the greatness of His strength.

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."

That our heaven is now covered with clouds, is no proof that He has deserted us. Ah, no! The bright bow of His love and mercy will span the abyss. The sun of His blessing will yet shine upon our storm-tossed and troubled Nation. We shall yet, I doubt not, see the *reason* for such a mysterious dealing. We shall yet feel that we have cause to praise Him out of the very midst of the fires. The very iniquity of such a nefarious scheme shocks every noble and right feeling of our nature. Not a man, with a spark of patriotism in his breast, or any suitable reverence for the office of the civil ruler as divinely ordained, but stands aghast at such a deed. We are all as one body united in its condemnation. That wicked murderer is already accomplishing its blessed work. The drapery of woe everywhere displayed speaks the pulsations of our common heart. It proves that we have common feelings and sympathies. Not only North, but South, will such a nefarious scheme produce its leavening power. Men of sterling virtue and noble feeling will rebuke and despise any encouragement that is to be gathered from the assassin's dagger. I believe that its regenerating power will tend to quench the burning fires of

animosity, recrimination and resentment wherever they exist.

Besides, let us remember that Jehovah has various instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purposes. Never, in the whole of our world's history, has *any* great purpose been perfected by the agency of a single individual. And this, for the very reason that the praise might not be ascribed to the creature. That the Most High has had a great good to be accomplished through the fiery ordeal of a four years' warfare, a purpose worthy of all that it has cost to carry it forward, who can doubt? Our late Magistrate, having performed his part of the work, is removed in order that *another* may take his place, and, it may be, act as our Executive Head, in finishing the blessed work of our country's purification. It was *his* precious reward that his life was spared to see the giant monster crippled and prostrate; his great satisfaction, that his pure desires and wearing, anxious efforts and fatherly care for his country's good were so far blessed by an Almighty Sovereign. And now that his mantle has been taken up by his successor, let us believe that he has that to do as our Nation's Head which God sees that he is *best* fitted to accomplish. Charitably let us judge, patiently let us wait, earnestly let us pray that he may be guided and governed by the spirit of grace and wisdom.

Truly, there is no trial that is not tempered with mercy. The sun is *always* shining upon one side of the wrathful cloud. We *do* indeed mourn to-day. Since that dreadful intelligence lately flashed on the electric wire throughout our land, we have all felt the crushing burden of our Nation's grief and bereavement. Our day's thoughts and our nightly sleep have been disturbed. No defeats of our armies in the field *ever* palsied our powers, or seemed to freeze the current of our Life's blood equal to this. But what would be our condition if the *whole* of that diabolical scheme had succeeded? Congress adjourned, the President not only, but the Vice President and every mem-

ber of the Cabinet, cold in death; no Federal head, no provision for official authority but the slow process of election, what to human view would have remained but dire anarchy, the bloody three days of the French capital renewed? "If the Lord Himself had not been on our side, now may Israel say, if the Lord Himself had not been on our side, when men rose up against us. They had swallowed us up quick, when they were so wrathfully displeased at us. But praised be the Lord, who hath not given us over for a prey unto their teeth. Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken and we are delivered."

Yes, delivered, but not without a precious ransom. Little did we suppose that our late peans of rejoicing would so soon be followed by the solemn funeral dirge; that the memory of glorious victories would in a few short hours be effaced by so foul a deed as that which now bows the heart of a whole people in sorrow to the dust. Never before has our nation's history exhibited a crime like that which now sullies its pages. Never again can we boast that the genius of our civil institutions and our admirable polity are a security to our rulers. Alas! The day has passed when those elected by the free suffrages of a sovereign people, can go out into the world without a guard, or adopting precautions against the stealthy assassin. True, these are *scary* times. This is when we may all assert that our late Magistrate was too confiding and trustful. Yet, who of us, at such a time of general rejoicing, when every breeze was wafting fresh tidings of victory, when every eye was bright with hope and every heart buoyant with gladness, who of us were suspecting or fearing *such* a deadly thrust into the very heart of our National life? Who anticipated such a mournful issue after the many perils that doubtless attended the visit of our lamented President to the Rebel Capital, that so soon after his return to that city which had been his home for the last four years, surrounded by friends, that he should be the

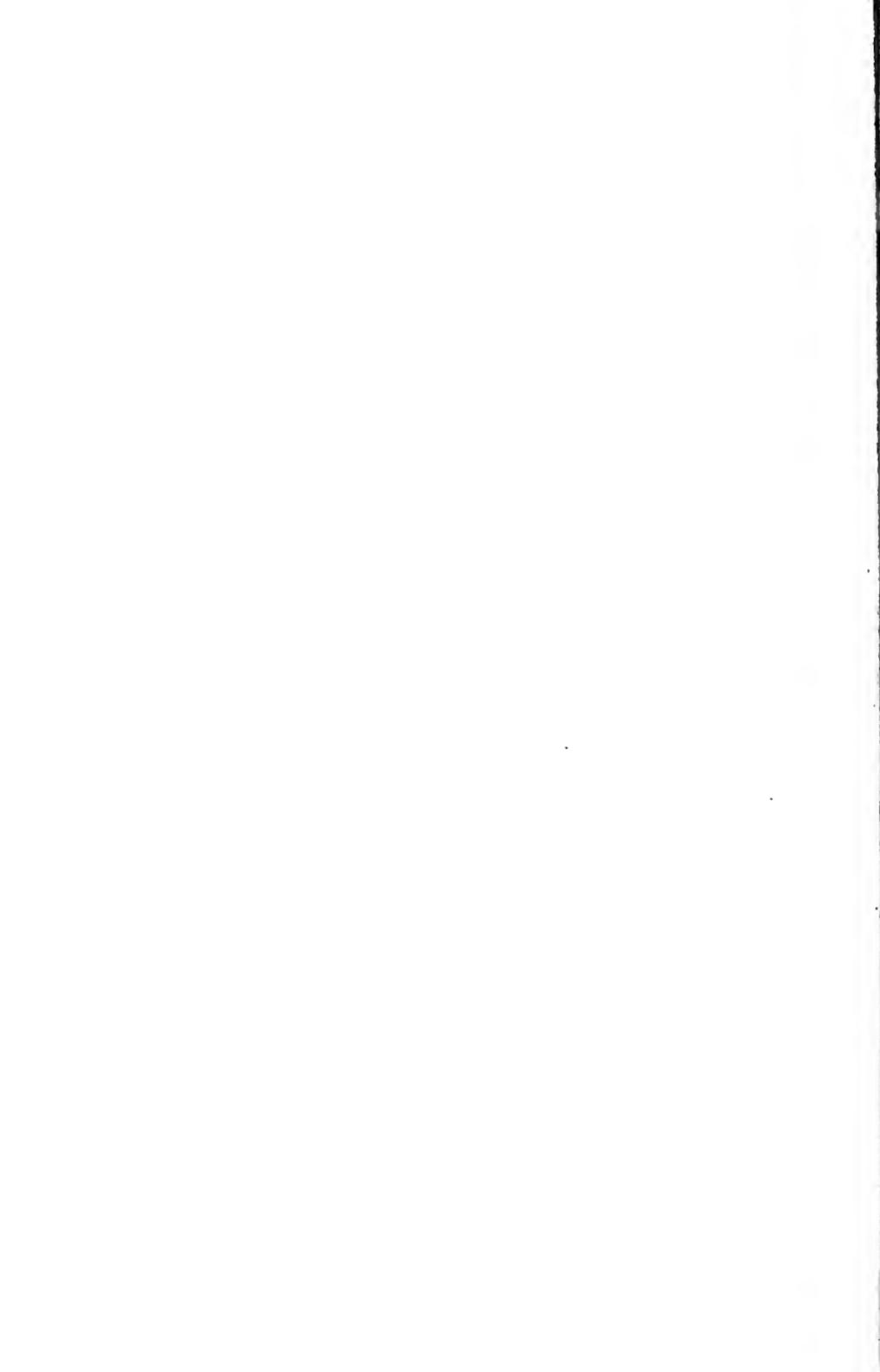
victim of a plot which fiends of the pit must have aided and developed. The more we dwell upon it, the more are we astounded and horrified at a deed which we had vainly supposed to be confined to brute despotisms and barbarous tribes.

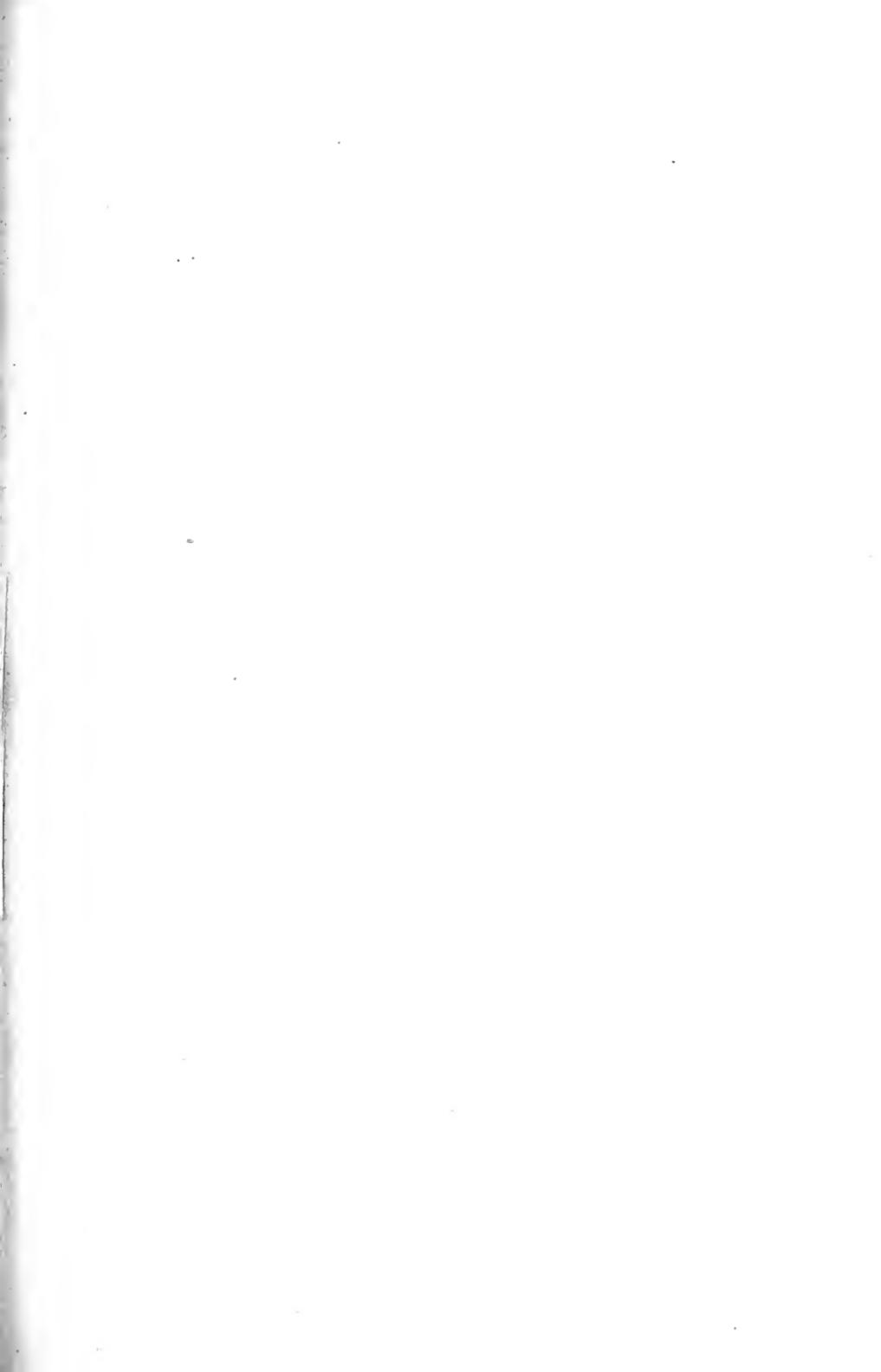
It forms a crisis in our country's history when we need to trust the more in one who governs the destinies of nations. May the altar of sacrifice, so long deluged with the blood of precious victims, and now consecrated by the noble form of our beloved President, soon crumble into dust. Surely we have *now* paid the full price of our country's redemption.

Gladly would we be present at that other solemn assemblage now gathered in and about the Executive Mansion. Not to note with curious eye that vast company of the great and noble, titled Ambassadors, illustrious statesmen, strong men as well as loving women, bowed in tears and melted in sorrow; but because *drawn* thither as by a loadstone's power, realizing that we belong to a mourning family, from which the paternal head has been removed; to fasten our eyes upon that pallid countenance; to surrender ourselves to such feelings as the mournful sight would naturally inspire; to read our own duty in that face of death; and then to resolve, that for the sake of present and future generations, we will guard at every cost the sacred casket of our country's liberties; we will maintain the integrity of a birthright bequeathed by our fathers, pure and unsullied. we will never surrender to the spoiler that holy heritage which belongs to posterity as well as ourselves; but will guard it to the last, counting no sacrifice too great for the preservation of a government that is destined to exert a mighty influence over other nations and peoples of the globe.

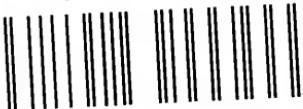
Yea, more: Standing by the ashes of the dead, we would pledge ourselves to God to make a right use of His teaching through this mysterious dealing of His Providence. As we now remember Him in our grief, so in

future will we in our rejoicings. As Christian Patriots we will ascribe to Him the *chief* honor and the *highest* adoration in that day of Jubilee, which we trust is near at hand, when we may all with one accord proclaim every stain upon our National honor wiped away, our sacred heritage fully saved from the hand of the destroyer.





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